EAT THE BREAD OF ETERNAL LIFE

1. Eat for the right reason  2. Eat the right way  3. Eat the right food

Every day every single one of us does something that is a matter of life or death. We eat. We have to eat. What happens if we do not eat? If we do not eat, we will die. If we do eat, we will live. You eat so that you can sustain your life.

Then the question is: What kind of life do you want? Why you eat, how you eat, and what you eat all determine what kind of life you will have. What kind of life do you want? Or I could ask: How long do you want life? I would probably get a variety of answers. We learn from Jesus to: EAT THE BREAD OF ETERNAL LIFE. And Jesus gives us three eating habits so that we can have eternal life. Eat for the right reason. Eat the right way. Eat the right food.

Too often we eat for the wrong reason. We do not eat to gain eternal life, we eat to enjoy this life. Some eat to fulfill responsibilities. We want food on the table, clothes on our backs and a roof overhead. If we can pay our bills, then we think we have life. Some eat to have fun. We want to spend time with our friends and have a good time. They think that is what life’s all about. Some eat to accomplish life goals. If we reach our dreams, then we have found life. Unfortunately, some just eat and do not know why. They just live.

None of those reasons is the right reason to eat. Paying the bills, having fun with friends, accomplishing goals are all great things to do, but they give us life here. If we think we have real life by doing those things, we are fooling ourselves and we are just like the people in the crowd following Jesus. Those people thought that they were seeking life, but all they had in mind were the things of this world. Jesus called them on it: Amen, amen, I tell you: you are not looking for me because you saw the miraculous signs, but because you ate the loaves and were filled.

And then he warned them as he now warns us: Do not continue to work for the food that spoils, but for the food that endures to eternal life. The longer we work to find comfort, fun or satisfaction in this world, the longer we keep ourselves from having true life. Everything in this world will spoil with death. Paid bills, fun with friends, even dreams will all disappear when this life ends.

God wants to give you real life. God wants you to start eating for the right reason. God wants you to eat food that endures to eternal life. Real life begins with your relationship with God, a relationship that brings eternal life. Without a right relationship with God, you cannot have life. A right relationship with God is only the beginning of life.

With this real life will come many other blessings. God will give you peace that lasts. You will never have to worry again about having enough to pay the bills because God will provide. You will never have to worry about the guilt you have been carrying for years because God will forgive. God will give you joy that lasts. You will not have to search for more friends or for more parties. God will be the friend that never lets you down. Living with God will fill your heart with constant joy. God will give you the perfect relationship. You will never have to be the one doing all the work. God will do his part for you and he will never let you down. This, my friends, is real life. It is life that does not spoil but endures. It is eternal life. It is life worth working for. Eat to have this life. How do you eat to have eternal life?

And we also need to eat the right way. When we look at the way we eat now, we quickly see that we are eating for the wrong reasons. We quickly realize that the way we eat now can never give us life eternal. We can see how we eat now by simply looking at how we spend our lives.

How do we spend our time? Most of it is spent working. When we are not working to pay the bills, we are out doing the things we enjoy. Maybe we get some sleep now and then. How do we spend our money? Electric. Water. Phone. Cell phone. Internet. Cable. Grocery store. Mall. Restaurant. Movie. Get the picture? We spend our money to pay the bills or have fun. How about our talents or abilities? You guessed it. We use them at our jobs or for recreation or maybe not at all. The point? We spend almost all of ourselves eating for the wrong reasons. We are back to eating food that spoils. We want eternal life, but we do not eat the right way.

Again we resemble the crowd following Jesus. After Jesus convinced them to eat food that endures to eternal life, they asked this question: What should we do to carry out the works of
God? They thought that they could do something to obtain eternal life. We are the same way. We are obsessed with what we can do to find life. We want life, but we do not know how to get it. Here is the secret: eternal life is not my work.

Eternal life is God's work. In response to the crowd's question Jesus answered: **This is the work of God: that you believe in the one he sent.** Do you see how Jesus turned the question around? It is not about what you do; it is about what God does. What a relief! We do not have to find life by ourselves. God wants to give us life. God does give us life.

To eat the right way simply means to believe. But do not think that by believing you are doing something. Even faith is the work that God does. G gives you the ability to believe. He gives you faith through his Word. When we hear that Word, God is feeding you. That leads to the last eating habit.

So you need to eat the right food. There is only one food that will endure to eternal life. There is only one bread of eternal life. It comes from God.

The bread of eternal life comes from heaven. We cannot obtain life from anywhere else. The people in the crowd did not get it. They were still thinking about life on this earth. They wanted one like Moses to give them a better life now. That is all they thought about was now. Jesus corrected them. It was not Moses who gave life before and it is not Moses or anyone else that gives life now. Jesus says: **Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the real bread from heaven.** Anyone who wants life beyond this earth and life that extends to heaven can only receive it from heaven – from God himself. The life the Father offers feeds more than 5,000 and more than a nation. The Father offers life to the world. The Father offers life that lasts forever.

Then Jesus clearly explained what that life giving bread is. Jesus declared: **I am the bread of life.** Jesus gives us life by giving his life to us. Jesus did not come to this world to enjoy its pleasures. Jesus did not long to be a man so that he could pay bills or hang out with friends. Jesus already had the perfect relationship with his Father. Jesus had everything he needed. He already enjoyed perfect peace, joy and satisfaction. However, Jesus wanted to share that life with you.

Jesus lived on this earth so that you could live in heaven. Jesus entered this sinful world full of death so that you could enter perfect life in heaven. Jesus severed his relationship with the Father to reunite you with the Father. Jesus even died so that you might truly live. Jesus is the only bread of eternal life.

Jesus is the only food you need. He said: **The one who comes to me will never be hungry, and the one who believes in me will never be thirsty.** Once you begin to taste and to eat the bread of eternal life, you will never look for something else. Jesus will fill you with life.

Eat the bread of eternal life and your life will change. Your perspective will change. You will stop worrying so much about today and the problems of this world. You will be comfortable knowing that a life free of worries awaits you in heaven. Your relationships will change. The most important relationship will be with your God. The more you get to know him and the more you realize his love, the more love you will have to give to those around you. Your actions will change. Life will slow down. You will not have to spend so much of yourself looking for life because you will have found it. Everything you do will thank God for your new life.

Jesus has given you the desire to eat life for the right reason - to work for food that endures to eternal life. Jesus has shown you the right way to eat - to let God work and to believe in the one he sent. Jesus has told you that he is the Bread of eternal life. Practically, how will you eat the bread of eternal life? First, commit to doing it. Eat the bread of eternal life. Make God a part of your life. Make your decisions consciously thinking about the life that God wants to give you.

Second, meditate on God's Word daily. Read a section of Scripture. When something strikes you, stop. For the rest of the day think about that thought from God. Eating the bread of life does not just happen. But, with God's help you can establish new eating habits and you can eat the bread of eternal life. Amen.

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